AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1.-32. (Cancelled)

33. (Currently Amended) A method for giving to at least one user access to a respective home operator over a communication network, said access being via an access network and through any of a plurality of supported visited networks, ~~comprising the step of forwarding to the at least one user a list of said supported visited networks~~ wherein at least one of said supported visited networks comprises a proxy/relay agent for those authentication requests that must be forwarded towards an identified operator and a redirect agent for those authentication requests that have an unknown realm, whereby said at least one user is given the possibility of selecting one of said supported visited networks as the path for reaching said respective home operator, the method further comprising:

receiving from said at least one user, user credentials at said access network;

forwarding said user credentials to an authentication function at said access network;

retrieving a set of available roaming networks for said at least one user, thus retrieving a list of operators holding a roaming agreement with said respective home operator of said at least one user;

forwarding said list to said at least one user;

receiving from said at least one user at said authentication function an identifier

of an operator selected from said list;

forwarding to the operator identified by said identifier a user's authentication

request;

redirecting to all said supported visited networks the authentication requests

whose realm does not correspond to any realm identified at said access network; and

returning from said supported visited networks to said access network redirect

notifications as well as contact information to said user's respective home operator.

34.-35. (Cancelled)

36. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~35~~ 33, comprising the step of

including the user credentials in said user's authentication request.

37. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 33, comprising the steps of:
assigning to said at least one user ~~an NAI identifier~~ a Network Access Identifier
(NAI); and
identifying said at least one user through the realm part of said NAI ~~identifier~~.

38. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~34~~ 33, wherein said steps of

receiving and forwarding user credentials and retrieving a set of available roaming

networks is performed only once, when a first authentication request is received by said

authentication function in respect to a user for which no direct roaming agreements exist

with said user's respective home operator.

39. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~34~~ 33, wherein, when said access network has a direct roaming agreement with said user's respective home operator, comprising the step of forwarding to said at least one user a list including said user's respective home operator only.

40. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~34~~ 33, wherein, when said access network has a direct roaming agreement with said user's respective home operator, comprising the step of directly forwarding the user's authentication request to said user's respective home operator.

41. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~35~~ 33, comprising the step of proxying said user's authentication request from said operator identified by said identifier to said user's respective home operator.

42. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~34~~ 33, comprising the step of selecting said authentication function as an ~~EAP~~ Extensible Authentication Protocol (EAP) based function.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, comprising the step of including in at least one of said access network and said supported visited networks a Diameter node.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, comprising the step of including in at least one of said access network and said supported visited networks a proxy/relay agent.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, comprising the step of including in at least one of said supported visited networks, a redirect agent.

46.-47. (Cancelled)

48. (Currently Amended) A communication network arranged for giving to at least one user access to a respective home operator via an access network and through any of a plurality of supported visited networks, ~~said access network being configured for forwarding to the at least one user a list of said supported visited networks~~ wherein:

at least one of said supported visited networks comprises a proxy/relay agent for those authentication requests that must be forwarded towards an identified operator, and a redirect agent for those authentication requests that have an unknown realm, whereby said at least one user is given the possibility of selecting one of said supported visited networks as the path for reaching said respective home operator;

said access network has an associated authentication server, said access network being configured for receiving user credentials from said at least one user and forwarding said user credentials to said authentication server;

said authentication server being configured for retrieving a set of available roaming networks for said at least one user, thus retrieving a list of operators holding a

roaming agreement with said respective home operator of said at least one user, and forwarding said list to said at least one user;

said authentication server being further configured for receiving from said at least one user an identifier of an operator selected from said list, and forwarding to the operator identified by said identifier a user's authentication request; and

said access network being configured for redirecting to all said supported visited networks, the authentication requests whose realm does not correspond to any realm identified at said access network, said supported visited networks being configured for returning to said access network redirect notifications as well as contact information to said user's respective home operator.

49.-50. (Cancelled)

51. (Currently Amended) The communication network of claim 50 48, wherein said authentication server is configured for including the user credentials in said user's authentication request.

52. (Currently Amended) The communication network of claim 48, wherein said at least one user is identified by an NAI identifier a Network Access Identifier (NAI) and said access network is configured for identifying said at least one user through the realm part of said NAI identifier.

53. (Currently Amended) The communication network of claim 49 48, wherein said authentication server is configured for receiving and forwarding user credentials

and retrieving a set of available roaming networks only once, when a first authentication

request is received by said authentication server in respect to a user for which no direct

roaming agreements exist with said user's respective home operator.

54. (Currently Amended) The communication network of claim 49 48, wherein

said access network has a direct roaming agreement with said user's respective home

operator and said access network is configured for forwarding to said at least one user

a list including said user's respective home operator only.

55. (Currently Amended) The communication network of claim 49 48, wherein

said access network has a direct roaming agreement with said user's respective home

operator and said access network is configured for directly forwarding the user's

authentication request to said user's respective home operator.

56. (Currently Amended) The communication network of claim 50 48, wherein aid

said supported visited networks are configured for proxying said user's authentication

request from said operator identified by said identifier to said user's respective home

operator.

57. (Currently Amended) The communication network of claim 49 48, wherein

said authentication server is an EAP Extensible Authentication Protocol (EAP) based

server.

58. (Currently Amended) The <u>communication</u> network of claim 48, wherein at least one of said access network and said supported visited networks is configured as a Diameter node.

59. (Currently Amended) The <u>communication</u> network of claim 48, wherein at least one of said access network and said supported visited networks includes a proxy/relay agent.

60. (Currently Amended) The <u>communication</u> network of claim 48, wherein at least one of said supported visited networks comprises a redirect agent.

61.-62. (Cancelled)

63. (Currently Amended) The <u>communication</u> network of claim 48, in the form of an ~~IP~~ <u>Internet Protocol (IP)</u> network.

64. (Currently Amended) A computer program product ~~capable of being~~ loadable ~~in the~~ <u>into a</u> memory of at least one computer and <u>being encoded on a computer readable medium, the computer program product</u> including software code portions for performing the steps of any one of claims 33 <u>or 36-45</u> ~~to 47~~.